

# Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI)

## Overview

Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) are eligible to participate and receive reimbursement in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Afterschool Snack Program (ASSP), as long as the meals served meet the meal pattern requirements and are served to eligible children. RCCIs can also receive reimbursement for milk under the Special Milk Program (SMP) if they are not claiming reimbursement for the NSLP, SBP, or the ASSP. RCCIs are included in the regulatory definition of “school” for NSLP, SBP, and SMP.

## Terminology

Day Student – A child attending an RCCI for part of the day and receives meals, but does not reside in an RCCI.

Institutionalized Child - A child residing in an RCCI, and not living with his/her actual family as an economic unit, considered to be a household of one.

Long-term Care Facility – A hospital, skilled nursing facility, intermediate care facility, or distinct part thereof, which is intended for the care of children confined for 30 days or more.

Private, Nonprofit Institution – An RCCI which is not public and is tax-exempt.

Public Institution – An RCCI which is operated by and primarily responsible to any level of Federal, State or local government.

Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCI) - Any distinct part of a public or nonprofit private institution that maintains children in residence, operates principally for the care of children, and, if private, is licensed by the State or local government to provide residential child-care services under the appropriate licensing code by the State or a subordinate level of government, *except for* residential summer camps which participate in the Summer Food Service Program for Children, Job Corps centers funded by the Department of Labor, and private foster homes.

## What is a Residential Child Care Institution?

A Residential Child Care Institution is a public or nonprofit private residential institution that operates principally for the care of children. RCCIs are included in the definition of “school” for NSLP, SBP, and SMP, so they are eligible to participate in school meal programs. Institutions qualifying as a “school” include:

- Homes for the mentally, emotionally, or physically impaired and unmarried mothers and their infants
- Group Homes
- Halfway Houses
- Orphanages
- Temporary shelters for abused children and for runaway children
- Long-term care facilities for chronically ill children
- Juvenile Detention Centers

**NOTE:** Boarding schools are **not** considered to be RCCIs.

RCCIs can receive full benefits of school meal programs provided that the institution:

- Is public or nonprofit private
- Operates principally for the care of children
- Is residential
- If private, is “tax exempt” under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954
- If private, is licensed by the State to provide residential child care

In addition to reimbursement, RCCIs may receive USDA Foods. USDA Foods are United States Department of Agriculture donated foods that are made available to sponsors participating in the NSLP. An RCCI’s entitlement, the allotted quantity of USDA Foods, is established based on the number of reimbursable lunches served to eligible children the prior year. USDA Foods should be used during lunch, but may also be used for breakfast, à la carte meals, suppers, and snacks.

RCCIs are subject to the same regulations as all schools participating in federal school meal programs. However, some flexibility is granted in order to accommodate unique situations that may only apply to RCCIs.

- RCCIs can continue to receive reimbursement under the NSLP, SBP, ASSP or SMP on the weekends. Reimbursement is made on a “per day of operation” basis. Therefore, reimbursement may be claimed for meals served any day that an institution is approved to provide its services. Afterschool Snacks served on weekends can only be claimed for reimbursement if they are served after a “school day” has ended. If there is no education during weekends, snacks cannot be claimed. The age limitation for the ASSP is 18 years old or under. However, if a child turns 19 before the end of the school year that ends on June 30, the RCCI may continue to claim reimbursement for the snacks until the end of that school year. Under no circumstances can an RCCI continue to be reimbursed for snacks served to children after the school year in which they become 19. Students become ineligible for reimbursable lunches or breakfasts as soon as they reach age 21.
- RCCIs must establish the eligibility of the children participating in school meal programs. RCCIs must maintain the names, ages (must be under 21 years of age), and entry and departure dates of all participating children. The eligibility requirements for institutionalized children are separate from those of day students because the requirements vary substantially between them.
- Offer versus Serve (OVS) regulations mandate that OVS be implemented in institutions serving children of a high school grade level (9-12). However, OVS is optional in RCCIs for any grade level because it may be difficult to administer OVS to institutionalized children, particularly when there are special circumstances such as special dietary needs or security concerns.
- If the RCCI serves family style meals, food items must be placed on the table in sufficient quantities to provide at least the minimum portions of the components for all the children at the table and to accommodate any adults supervising the meal service who are eating with the children. The full portion of each item must be served to each child. When the full portion has not been served to a child initially, supervising adults must assume the responsibility of actively encouraging the child to accept service of the full portion during the course of the meal. If a child’s meal does not include at least the minimum quantities of required items, it cannot be included in that day’s count of reimbursable meals. If the RCCI is restricted to serving the same

quantities to all children, the minimum portion size must be that required for the highest age group. The quantities for each age group are minimums. RCCIs must never serve less than the minimum quantities.

- Meal pattern flexibility is allowable for RCCIs with students of different age-grade groups that can show legitimate safety concerns if students are served different portions and can demonstrate operational limitations to separating age-grade groups. The RCCI must submit a request to the State agency to utilize this flexibility and clearly articulate the safety concerns to the satisfaction of the State. State agencies must consider RCCI requests to implement this option on a case-by-case basis and ensure that the above criteria are met.

### **Why is a Residential Child Care Institution Important?**

The National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and the Afterschool Snack Program extend nutrition and education benefits to public and private non-profit organizations caring for students in residential group settings.

### **Resources**

Additional resources may be available for this topic. Please check the Idaho School Nutrition Reference Guide website for copies of manuals, user guides, and helpful links to relevant subject matter.